

US/ICOMOS and the Conference on Transportation Corridors as Cultural Landscapes

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The conference held in Natchitoches, LA., at Northwestern State University was a milestone in awakening the U.S. consciousness to the fact that out there in the United States and in the world are cultural landscapes, including transportation corridors. They should be studied and evaluated for their significance in the United States and the world's cultural heritage. It was also a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with the university and the town where the newly created National Center for Preservation Technology and Training would be located. Most of us prior to this occasion had never been to this charming historic Southern river town.

We discovered that cultural landscapes had been studied in October 1992 under the aegis of UNESCO. The workgroup found that the subject deserved recognition that could not properly be allowed under the World Heritage Convention operational guidelines. It was reported that suggestions to alter the operational guidelines to accommodate this subject had been put forward by the French as early as 1984.

The 1992 representatives to the study came from UNESCO, ICOMOS, IUCN, IFLA and experts from eight countries (Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom). They represented various disciplines, including archaeology, history, landscape ecology, landscape architecture and planning.

Three principal forms of cultural landscape were identified: those that were designed and created intentionally, organically evolved landscapes, and associative cultural landscapes.

Regarding transportation corridor cultural landscapes, the UK participant David Jacques, at the meeting in France stated that "the group concluded that the framework being worked on for cultural landscapes should prove helpful to the issue of corridor landscapes. Corridor landscapes can probably be accommo-

dated with a careful interpretation of the criteria and the guidelines. Corridors, however, should not be thought of simply as landscapes, but as industrial archaeology and sometimes as traditional settlement patterns."

A few days after the Natchitoches conference, the World Heritage Committee adopted at its 20th annual meeting in Santa Fe revised cultural criteria which now makes it possible to identify and evaluate cultural landscapes for the World Heritage List. This Committee called attention to the following:

1. in view of the relationship of many cultural landscapes to the maintenance of ecosystem processes and biological diversity, the importance of interdisciplinary review of proposals for inscribing such sites needs to be kept in mind;
2. it is essential to ensure that cultural landscapes nominated for the World Heritage List meet the highest standards of universal significance and integrity that characterize sites inscribed previously under natural and cultural criteria;
3. the States Parties be informed of the new criteria and be asked to submit Tentative Lists of cultural landscapes in accordance with the Operational Guidelines; and
4. the Centre is requested to convene a group of experts on the Tentative Lists and related issues and report back to the 1994 17th session of the Bureau.

It was the consensus of the Historic Transportation Corridors Conference participants, as published in this CRM, that both U.S. and World Heritage landmark criteria be studied and revised, if necessary, to permit designation, protection and interpretation of transportation corridors as cultural landscapes.

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Cover illustrations:

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